Long-term Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Scoping Meeting

Prepared by:
Central Valley Regional Water Board
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Introductions

- Regional Water Board project team
- Jones and Stokes, Associates project team
- Coalition representatives

Meeting Goals

- Gather feedback/ideas, long-term irrigated lands regulatory program:
  - Potential scope and goals
  - Alternatives for achieving program goals
  - Alternative regulatory tools
  - Alternative evaluation measures
- Discuss next steps and Environmental Impact Report process
- Questionnaire

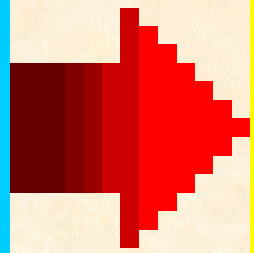
Irrigated Lands Discharge

- Agricultural tailwater, stormwater runoff, and subsurface drainage may contain pollutants
- Discharge surface water/percolation to groundwater may impact beneficial uses:
  - Municipal supply, aquatic life…
- Pollutants include:
  - nutrients
  - pesticides
  - salts…sediment


Ag Lands
Transpiration
Irrigation Well
Ag Ditch
Tailwater
Perforated Pipe
Subsurface Drain
River/Stream
Surface Flow
Retaining
Pond
Water Table
Discharge/
Recharge
Original Water
Table Depth
Aquifer
Discharge/
Recharge
Groundwater Flow
Tile Drain
New Water Table

Requirements, Any Discharge:

- **Anyone discharging pollutants**
- **Into State waters**
  - Canals, rivers, lakes, bays, estuaries, ponds, groundwater…



- **File a discharge application* with the Regional Water Board or;**
- **Obtain conditional waiver coverage**

*Report of Waste Discharge

Regional Water Board Regulates Many Discharges

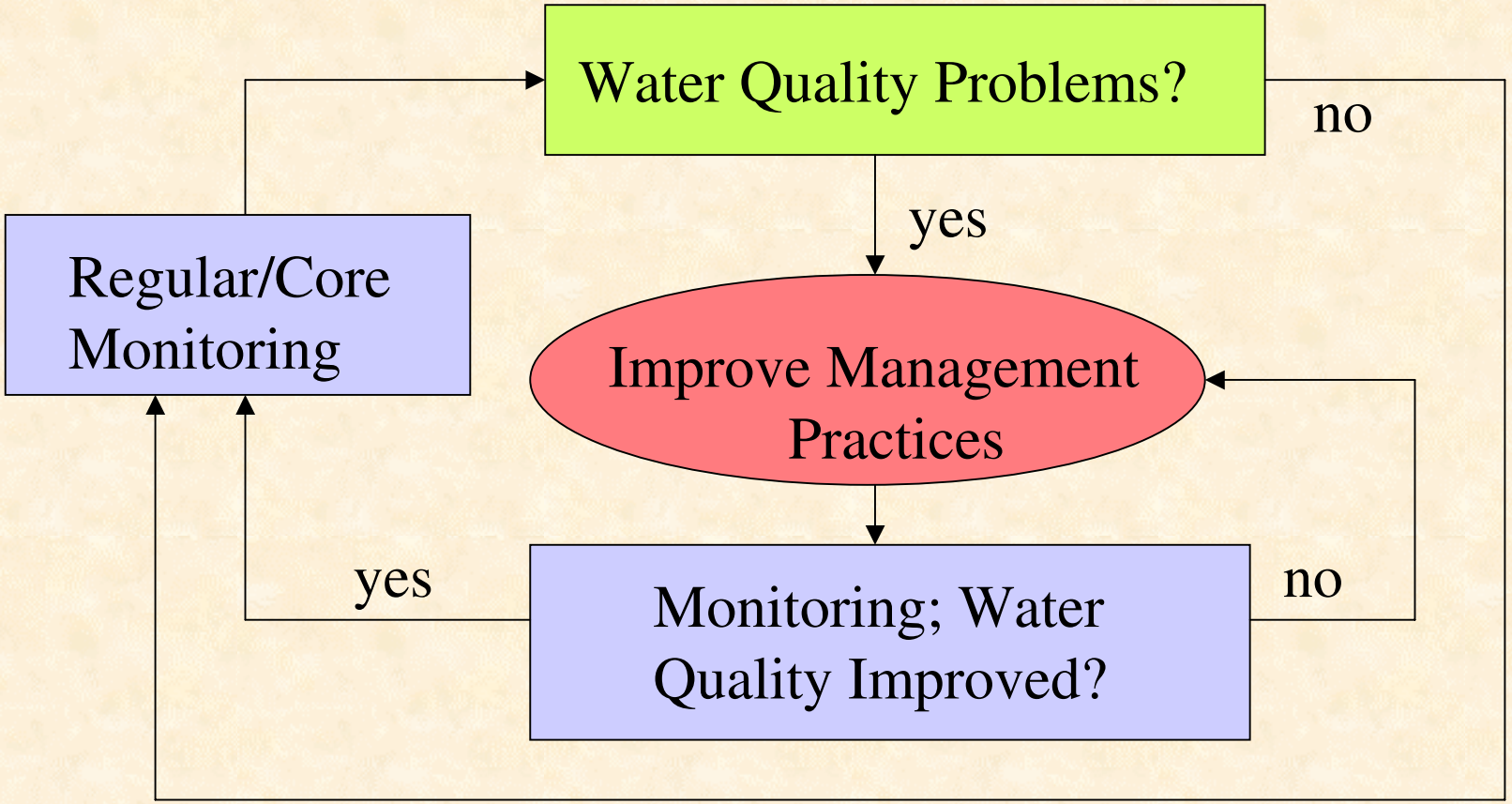
- Example: Construction Stormwater
  - Construction sites grading more than 1-acre, discharge permit required
  - Implement best management practices
  - Conduct monitoring and reporting

  - Retain management plans onsite
  - Conduct wet weather inspections

Current Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program

- Conditional Waiver (individual/Coalition)
  - Coverage for irrigated lands pollutant discharge to surface waters
  - Requires compliance with Basin Plan water quality objectives
  - Requires water quality monitoring
  - Improve water quality through source control management practices

Current Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program Focus



Coalition Groups

- Intermediary between growers and Regional Water Board
- Work with growers to identify water quality problems
  - Conduct monitoring
  - Develop management plans
- Growers are ultimately responsible for compliance with Conditional Waiver

Central Valley Coalitions

- **Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition**
- **California Rice Commission**
- **San Joaquin County & Delta Water Quality Coalition**
- **Westside San Joaquin River Watershed Coalition**
- **East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition**
- **Southern San Joaquin Valley Water Quality Coalition**
- **Westlands Water District**
- **Goose Lake Water Quality Coalition**

Existing Conditions Report

- Purpose
- Public Comment & Review
- Revisions Based on Public Comment
  - Chapter 3 – Surface Water Quality
  - Chapter 4 – Ground Water Quality
  - Chapter 5 – Management Practices

Development, Long-term Program

- Why?
  - Irrigated lands operations can add pollution to State waters (ground and surface waters)
  - Current Waiver considered interim program
  - Other polluting operations are regulated:
    - municipal/industrial/construction stormwater
    - industrial wastewater
    - municipal wastewater…

Long-Term Program

- Regional Water Board direction to conduct Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for long-term program
- Long-term program alternatives necessary to conduct EIR
  - Surface/ground water
  - Irrigated lands definition
  - Program goals
  - Program implementation

Long-term Program – Irrigated Lands Definition

Current Definition	Possible Change
Lands where water is applied to produce crops including: land planted to row, vineyard, pasture, rice, greenhouse with permeable floors, managed wetlands…	Current definition, **except** for managed wetlands and greenhouse operations with permeable floors

Scope: Long-term Program

Current Scope	Possible Change
Regulation of waste discharge from irrigated lands to surface waters Waste: salts, nutrients, pesticides, sediment…	Regulation of waste discharge from irrigated lands to ground and surface waters 

Goals: Long-term Program

Current Goals	Possible Change
Protection of beneficial uses (municipal supply, habitat…) in surface waters receiving wastes from irrigated lands Beneficial uses: meet applicable water quality objectives	Protection of beneficial uses (municipal supply, habitat) in ground and surface waters receiving wastes from irrigated lands

Allowable Degradation?

- In some areas, existing ground/surface water quality may be much better than standards
- Goal of meeting existing standards may allow existing water quality to be degraded
- Beneficial uses must be protected
- Best practical treatment or control

Alternative Approaches for Achieving Program Goals

- Current program – similar approach for everyone
- Can regulatory requirements be applied in a more focused manner? Focus on similar:

  - Geography
  - Climate
  - Commodity
  - Operations
  - Irrigation Practices
  - Threat to water quality
- Must achieve goals (protect Beneficial Uses)

Alternative Regulatory Approaches

- Discharge limitations
- Pollution minimization requirements
- Management practices
- Operational requirements
- Monitoring

- Regulatory mechanisms:
  - Waste discharge requirements, waivers, discharge prohibitions

Evaluating Program Alternatives

- Environmental impacts/benefits
  - Impacts: mitigation measures?
  - Ground vs. surface water protection
  - Reduced chemical usage - benefit
- Economic impacts
  - Impacts to State and local economy
  - Cost of management measures
  - Cost of regulatory program

Evaluating Program Alternatives

- Efficiency
  - Cost effective for State and Agricultural community
  - Most efficient program alternative = best
- Fair
  - Level of regulatory oversight commensurate with the level of potential threat to water quality
  - Comparison with other programs
  - Consistency

Evaluating Program Alternatives

- Effectiveness at protecting water quality
  - Compare with other programs
    - e.g., other Regional Water Boards (Central Coast)
    - Other states
- Must be consistent with applicable State and federal laws
  - Program must be consistent with Basin Plan requirements

Comments?

Project Timeline (subject to change)

- Summer 2008: Finalize Existing Conditions Report
- Fall 2008: Draft staff report for long-term irrigated lands regulatory program
- Spring 2009: Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for long-term irrigated lands regulatory program
- Summer 2009: Regional Board certification of EIR and long-term program

Interaction with Stakeholders

- How would you like to work with us or be kept updated as we move forward?

Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Progress

- Progress on EIR
- Alternatives to the proposed long term Program
- Analysis in EIR
- Draft EIR/ Public Comment Period
- Final EIR
- Adoption

Contact Information

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- Long-term program website:
  - http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/irrigated_lands/development_long_term_ilrp/index.shtml